



A SCIFI KNOCKOUT !! MIKE JAMES' MODEL AGENT VENUS

I hope you get to read this, since it is difficult to get your eyes away from the picture. Well, good!! You are finally reading the article!

Good art should come from the deep inspiration of an artist, and besides getting the attention of the beholder, it should also inspire others with beauty and imagination, showing talent and dedication. Art should communicate and fire-up our own imagination and feelings. Art should come from the heart and those who want to acquire it should also love it.

There is a lot to love about Mike James' "Agent Venus". Just like the time of the Renaissance when Boticelli's gave to the world "The Birth of Venus", this futuristic Venus sparks our imagination and demands attention. Only a small handful of well-trained artists manage to stay true to their beliefs and continue what they love. Mike James presents a resin model with a body of sculptural proportions.

SCIFI-STORIES contacted Mike James for an interview, so we could know more about "Agent Venus", his talent and the future.

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Sketch that inspired Agent Venus' pose.

I just thought it was a pure "sculpture-like" pose with her head turned up the street looking for the bus. She seemed bored, almost insouciant, her posture was uber-relaxed, and sexy x 3! Sometimes, life is good.

So, there you have the complete inspiration, Sally Forth in her retro space costume and this teen sweetheart, with her little black shorts and sexy hipshot. All I had to do was replace the trash can she was leaning on. I tried a few different things like a mini-robot and a rock ledge, but settled on her leaning on her nuclear rifle, which BTW, was built using various toy parts, springs, bolts, buttons and just some plain old clay sculpting.

What kind of reaction did you get from the public after "Agent Venus" was finished?

Well, the sales were strong on Venus right off the bat, so I guess the reaction was favorable. I'd done my usual thing at the time, and that was to take out full color, back cover ads on the kit. That sort of ad space costs an arm and a leg, but it makes sure you don't get left in the dust. But, other than good sales, I guess that's about my only indication of whether a kit is good or not.

People might be surprised that even popular artist's like Frazetta, Julie Bell, Olivia don't often hear reactions to their artworks, especially if you don't do the conventions. I stopped doing conventions in 2001, so I'm really out of the loop. I may need to start up going to them again.

I do remember that the Japanese went ape for Agent Venus. I sold more of Agent Venus' in Japan than even in the United States. She was featured in the premier issue of "Cooltoys" as a fold out, and they did a very nice multipage interview article with me. Venus still sells pretty well, even after being out for 6 years.

Well, Mike, I guess that makes me a Japanese, since I also went ape when I saw your model !!

Maybe it has to do with the fact that she's a really, really fun build. You've got metallic parts to paint, cruddy rocks, a beautiful face, easy hair, a suit you can paint any old way you want and it'll be dynamite no matter what, the clear bubble helmet's a gas, and even decals to put on her are a fun detail...plus, she's a sexy



Mike James' "Agent Venus" A strapping 16 inches tall, solid cast resin sculpture.

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Mike James art work is known around the world and is among the best pinup artists. Besides creating sculptures, he has to his credit several paintings, drawings and is also an avid photographer. His works have been presented in New York galleries and many other art museums across the nation.

When Agent Venus reached Japan, the public went nuts and Mike James became an instant celebrity among the figure modeler fans.

First, how "Agent Venus" came to be in your creative mind & why?

I've been an avid comic book collector. My attic looks much like a comicbook store with boxes and boxes of alphabetized comics in polyethylene bags with white backer boards. In one of the end boxes are "Wally Wood" comics. Mr. Wood had a WWII era female character called Sally Forth. I always loved this character. She was like a dense teenage bombshell, always messing up, getting into trouble on her missions, always getting her clothes ripped off accidentally.

In one episode, Sally is shot off into space for some silly mission wearing this cool skintight spacesuit with one of those old-style 1940's bubble helmets....you know, the kind you see in old Sci-fi movies. I first read Sally Forth in the late 60's, my friend's father collected them. I myself was only a teenager, so sweet little Sally uh..."spoke" to me.



Sally Forth © Wallace Wood

Anyway, that spacesuited Sally image always stuck with me. So...there's the inspiration for Agent Venus' styling. As anyone who knows me, knows, I am forever sketching when I'm outside the house. Nothing artistic or big. I'm just recording quickie ideas and stuff with a few lines...a bit like a shorthand camera.

Coming out of an office supply store in town one nice summer day I noticed this girl across the street. She looked to be high school age and was I guess waiting for a bus, as the bus stop sign was nearby. She was leaning on this trash receptacle with one hand in the most seductive way. One hip shot out in the sexiest way. She had on these little black shorts and a white cotton belly shirt. I would have paid \$20 for a camera, but instead, I whipped out my little sketchbook. I jotted down her pose just in time, because seconds later it was gone. It's the very pose of my Agent Venus resin kit, almost without alteration.



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eyefull. What's not to like?

How was your desire to become a modeler born?

As a child I built plastic styrene kits...you know, the AMT cars, those Aurora monster kits, like the Phantom, Frankenstein, Werewolf. There really weren't any figure kits in the sci-fi realm back then unless you consider Superman and Godzilla Sci-Fi. So, there was my childhood love of models.

I grew up, went to college, majored in painting and sculpture, so I knew all about additive sculpture and the casting process, even did a few bronzes. I got a Master's Degree in graphic design in Arizona and moved to New York to work for ad agencies. Boring, huh? I was making good money, but you know...was wearing a tie to work every day...kinda' got away from the fun stuff.

About 1991 or 92, I was in Chinatown in a store under the Williamsburg bridge. I saw these plastic model kits of bikini'd Japanese girls in the window with prices in Japanese yen. They were really cute. I wondered how much they were. I went inside and found they had all kinds of neat stuff I'd never seen before in kit form. One was a big, all-chrome Enterprise based on the Star Trek movie of the time. I bought the Enterprise the second I saw it. I also bought a bunch of little articulated dolls of the Star Trek crew characters. They even had Perseus Kambata, you know, that bald alien chick in the first or second Star Trek movie. →

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Man, I thought she was a hot tamale. I remember watching the movie with her strolling across the bridge in her little mini robe and thinking, "Please writers, make her one of the regular crew! Please!" Ha ha.

Anyway, I also bought my very first solid resin kit. I couldn't understand why the owner of the store kept referring to them as "garage kits" until I asked him about it. Poured resin kits were not mass produced by big companies, but cast, often in garages or basements by young sculptors. As little as 30 might exist of a character. This flabbergasted me.

Over the next two years I guess I bought and built a dozen resin kits, modifying them quite significantly. I found many people collected the kits, because they went out of production so quickly. Once it's gone, it's gone.

After all this building and remodeling and resculpting faces, I finally decided to do a character from scratch. I bought some wire, some Sculpey, made a base and began a sexy girl I named "Sedusa, the Devil's Daughter". Since I'd made friends with a kit producer in NYC and another in Australia, I learned the basic materials and principals of how to make RTV molds and cast in resin. I found the process messy, but fascinating.

After I built and painted Sedusa, a friend of mine stopped by and asked if he could by it off me. I said "No way...too much work went into it" but then I realized I had the molds. So I suggested he pay for the resin, and I'd cast him up the parts, so he can build and paint it himself. Obviously, it was a short leap from that...to recognizing the fact that I might as well cast out this mold.

So I placed an ad in a major kit magazine, and...whammo...Sedusa sold like hotcakes, and I made money for another kit.

Regarding the story behind "Agent Venus", is this a story of your own?

Yes, absolutely. Unlike just about every other kitbuilder out there, I invent ALL my own stuff from scratch. I've just got too many ideas to waste my time developing other's creations. It takes a loooooong time to sculpt a figure kit this size, to this level. It's like three months. Since I create my OWN characters from thin air they are in essence "blank slates" if you will.

During the time I'm sculpting, the girl begins to take on a personality in my own mind. You start imagining things about her. Who she is, what her backstory is. It's happened with every kit I've ever sculpted. The kits develop, almost automatically, specific personalities, with back stories.

In fact, 4 of my characters seemed so vividly fleshed out to me, that I wrote and drew their origins in comic book form. For a few years, I included those comics free with the kit, but it just got to be too time consuming and expensive. Comics aren't worth the effort unless you plan on printing and selling at least tens of thousands. It takes about a month to write, pencil, ink, and letter a comic. That's a lot of time doing something with no financial gain to it.

By the time I got to Agent Venus, she was like my 8th kit, I'd long since stopped with the kit comics. But I had a great story in mind for her. However, as I said, it's just not practical.

But I couldn't help myself...I put the opening of the story on Venus' homepage.

Agent Venus' kit is sold for \$195 dollars and \$20 for S&H. This kit can only be purchased directly from Mike James website at "www.jamesart.com"



For international shipping rates or for more information regarding who can professionally build this kit for you, you can contact Mike James at his email, arthouse@ptd.net

Agent Venus' webpage includes a section with assembly instructions and painting tips for building this model.

The model also comes with a Certificate of Authenticity with the Raised Seal and Personal Inked Signature of Mike James.

Mike tells us he may have a Spidergirl on the horizon. Mike's wife, Sandy, helps him with all his creations. Mike's company "Azimuth Design" has many other resin model girl kits for sale. Some are for mature audiences only.

If you want to be the owner of the baddest girl in this side of Andromeda, you know what to do!



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